

STEWARDSHIP

Archaeological sites are non-renewable resources that make up our collective cultural heritage. Stewardship of these resources is a crucial part of preserving our past—especially since, according to estimates, nearly 80% of Wisconsin's archaeological sites have already been destroyed or severely damaged.

ARTIFACT COLLECTING

Artifact collectors not only enjoy a fascinating hobby, they also play an important part in archaeological research. Artifact collecting helps us learn what people lived at a site, how old the site is, and what life in the past was like. Responsible, ethical collection of artifacts begins with obtaining permission from private landowners. (Removing artifacts from public land is illegal.) You can enhance your collecting experience and make your own contributions to archaeological research by following these simple practices:

RECORD YOUR FIND

When you find artifacts, note where you found them as precisely as possible. A simple recording system such as numbering sites will help you keep artifacts found at different sites separate. Labeling artifacts will preserve locational information for the future.

CONTACT AN ARCHAEOLOGIST

Wisconsin has a state archaeologist, and many colleges and museums have archaeologists who would be happy to photograph your finds and record the information. Rest assured that they will *not* confiscate your artifacts, steal your site, or broadcast its location. You'll be helping to piece together essential knowledge of the past. In return, you'll learn how old your artifacts are, what materials they're made of, and what they were used for.

DON'T BUY, SELL, OR TRADE ARTIFACTS

Buying and selling artifacts encourages looting as well as the manufacture of fraudulent artifacts. Once an artifact is sold, the most important information—site location—is lost.

NEVER DIG OR EXCAVATE A SITE WITHOUT PROPER SUPERVISION

Archaeological sites cannot be replaced. Once a site is dug improperly, it is destroyed forever.

RESOURCES

STATE AND FEDERAL PRESERVATION LAWS

A number of federal and state laws help to protect archaeological resources. The **National Historic Preservation Act of 1966** requires federal agencies to ensure that their actions won't adversely affect archaeological sites that are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The **Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979** provides more protection for archaeological resources on public and Indian lands, requires that federal agencies obtain a permit for excavating or removing archaeological resources from those lands, and outlines how artifacts will be preserved (curated).

All human burial sites, including cemeteries and Indian mounds, are protected under the **Wisconsin Burial Sites Law**. Rock art sites are protected under Wisconsin Statutes Section 943.01. For a more detailed list of archaeological preservation resources, go to <http://wisconsinhistory.org/archaeology/preserve/>

BOOKS

Wisconsin Archeology Handbook. *The Wisconsin Archeologist*, Vols .1/2, 1997.

Indian Mounds of Wisconsin, by Robert Birmingham and Leslie Eisenberg. Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 2000.

Projectile Point Guide for the Upper Mississippi River Valley, by Robert F. Boszhardt. Univ. of Iowa Press, 2003.

Twelve Millennia: Archaeology of the Upper Mississippi River Valley, by James L. Theler and Robert F. Boszhardt. Univ. of Iowa Press, 2003.

SITE RECORDATION FORM

<http://www.uwlax.edu/mvac/PointGuide/PointGuide.htm>

CONTACTS

Office of the State Archaeologist

816 State Street
Madison, WI 53706-1482
(608) 264-6496

<http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/archaeology/osa/>

Mississippi Valley Archaeology Center

1725 State Street
La Crosse, WI 54601
(608) 785-8463

<http://www.uwlax.edu/mvac>

WISCONSIN ARCHAEOLOGY

Preserving the Past for the Future

What is archaeology?

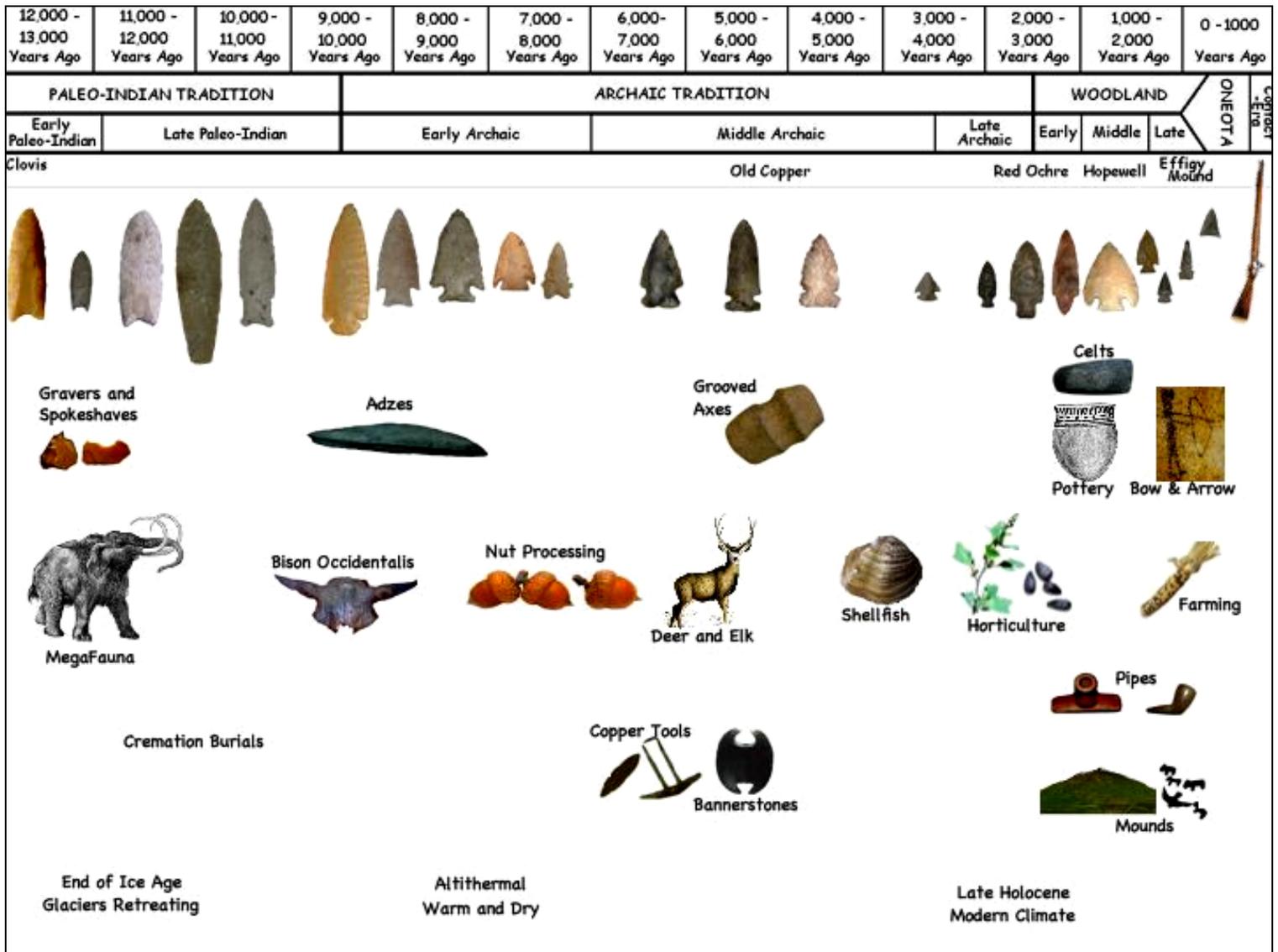
Archaeology is the scientific study of past human cultures. Through survey and excavation, archaeologists uncover material remains left behind by people. By studying these artifacts, archaeologists can reconstruct past life-ways and environments.



Why study archaeology?

Archaeology contributes to our understanding of the past and can inform us about the present and future. Many archaeology projects are done when land developments threaten archaeological sites. Since these sites are non-renewable resources, archaeologists excavate them before this information is lost.

Wisconsin Archaeology Overview



Get Involved!



Join the Wisconsin Archeological Society (WAS): <http://www.uwm.edu/Org/WAS/memorder.html>. WAS promotes preservation and educational programming around the state and publishes *The Wisconsin Archeologist*, the nation's longest continuously printed state archaeology journal.



Join the Wisconsin Historical Society: <http://wisconsinhistory.org/membership/>. The Society supports programs and research throughout the state.



Join the Mississippi Valley Archaeology Center: www.uwlax.edu/mvac. MVAC offers public events including archaeology tours, guest lectures, and volunteer opportunities.



Other regional archaeology societies offer public events as well. To search for societies and organizations near you, go to http://wisconsinhistory.org/archaeology/local_arch.asp.